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affection overrode kinship.[64] Thus affinal relatives and non-kin neighbors were also requested to assist. Buddhists attended Muslims and vice-versa, (though Muslim women preferred female assistance).

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In emergencies the professional midwives' area was the whole community. They travelled long distances to attend women who were not close kin. No parturient, however, even in an emergency, was ever attended by a complete stranger. In all likelihood, every adult in the community knew the midwives at least by sight.

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As to the size of the practices, reported activities ranged from the Muslim midwife's estimate of 10 per year, down to 2 or 3 per year.[65] The 2 men and the most competent female midwife reported about 4 per year, a figure probably weighted on the side of the difficult cases per year. It is noteworthy that the men, in spite of being as we shall see both mǭ and midwife, did not have larger practices than the women. It was considered basically a woman's skill.

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None of the midwives derived much income from their practices, nor did they expect it to be significant. Their main income came from rice-growing from which, however, the women and one of the males had largely retired because of age. The other male midwife was exceptionally busy as a labor contractor, builder of houses, land-owner, and headman as well. The midwives found the 5 to 30 baht offered

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64. Two teachers who were in the kinship category of granddaughter (lān) to the 3 best midwives, and lived only a few hundred yards from them, were delivered by a woman who was mother-in-law to one and husband's older sister to the other and who was "not a midwife but knows how." Since labor was quick and normal, no higher help was necessary. On the other hand, all 3 of these midwives turned up to help at the confinement of another cherished "granddaughter." Only one of them actually delivered the infant but other functions were diplomatically divided up by the young mother.

65. Hauck studied 46 babies, aged up to 3 and so not all born in one year. Thirty-one were delivered by 4 of the professional female midwives (12,9,7,3 respectively); a male midwife and an "experienced" person had done 2 each; 11 women, one each (Hauck, 1959:61). A few of the latter 11 were ordinary kin, not midwives.

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a loosely defined, laterally oriented kindred; the nation-state (mentioned not for formal reasons, but because it actually is psychologically important); and to a lesser extent, the village monastery and school. Of these five institutions, the nuclear family is the principal focus of psychological concern, beyond the individual himself. Otherwise, there are in Bang Chan no castes, age-grade societies, occupational groups (other than the family), neighborhood groups, or groups expressive of village solidarity (such as councils or governing boards) which might impose a sense of obligation on the villagers, or to whose norms or functions the villagers might have to conform.* Bang Chaners do not have to contribute their labor to their community, serve as village guards, contend with the dictates of village elders, or even actively coöperate with fellow villagers.

All villagers have additional relationships of varying degrees of intimacy both within and without the community, but these are dyadic, not group, relationships based on implicit expectations of mutual benefit. Such contacts are in nature primarily idiosyncratic (friends), transient (reciprocal work groups, gambling and drinking partners), or contractual (as opposed to affective or kin determined: vendors, landlords, debtors, rice millers, employers, and doctors). It is important to recognize that if some of these latter relationships take on positive affective qualities, they may also assume some of the forms and feelings of kinship. Thus, a young man who is taken on as a hired hand by a family frequently ceases to be considered an "employee" and becomes instead an "adopted son." (This type of *gemeinschaft* relationship, contrary perhaps to theoretical expectations, is also characteristic of many occupational situations in Bangkok.) In a similar vein, the terms for older sibling (*phii*), elder uncle (*lung*), and elder aunt (*paa*) are used as terms of address and reference between individuals who are obviously not related to each other, but who wish to mark overtly their fondness and respect for one another. The use of these

* There are two minor exceptions to this generalization: (1) a monastery lay committee whose functions are limited to the secular tasks of monastery administration, and membership in which brings prestige and Buddhist merit to a few selected members of the community; and (2) reciprocal work groups organized for and limited to rice transplanting and harvesting, membership in which is completely voluntary and a matter of mutual convenience (Janlekha 1955). Careful accounts are kept as to how much labor is contributed by each participating family, and responsibility for remitting labor received lies with the individual participant, not the group.

It must be noted that the monastery and its cadre of relatively permanent monks, although the very institution that defines the existence of "the village of Bang Chan," is not from the point of view of its clientele primarily a unit representative of village cohesiveness. It is first and foremost a Buddhist monastery where one may make merit and only secondarily *the Bang Chan* Monastery. Several members of the community patronize other monasteries, and several Bang Chan monks come from other locales. The keen sense of individual obligation that villagers feel toward their monastery could be directed toward any monastery.

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fictive terms is of course sometimes prompted by nothing more than the desire to be polite, but equally often it symbolizes genuine feelings of affection and obligation not too different from what the terms imply when they are used in their original kinship context. Bang Chaners have a wonderfully convenient term, *phyan-yaad*, a compound meaning literally "family friends," which is used to refer both to friends to whom ego feels so close that he considers them members of his family and to individuals whom he considers his friends *because* they are members of his family. The particular persons to whom this term, as well as those noted above, is applied vary widely from informant to informant (expectedly so because they are non-institutionalized terms). However, the point to be emphasized is that for all villagers kinship provides a basic referential mechanism for expressing the degree of psychological affiliation that they feel toward other human beings.

An *awareness* of degrees of psychological affiliation and obligation and of the modes for expressing such sentiments are very much a part of village life. For with the exception of the five institutions mentioned above, most Bang Chaners, as I have noted elsewhere (Sharp *et al.* 1956: 241), are really not obliged—and do not feel obliged—to be beholden to anyone but themselves. In a very real sense, the village is comprised of 1,771 individualists whose major goals in life are to obtain sufficient land to support themselves, their growing children, and their religion, free from physical insecurities and unencumbered by entangling social obligations. When they enter into relationships with other people they do so with an awareness that they are always acting of their own free will.

Despite the conventions of ethnographic reporting, it is difficult to delimit the precise nature of the nuclear family in Bang Chan. The nuclear family clearly is the ideal for all villagers, but because Bang Chaners are just as responsive to convenience as they are to custom, there is considerable variation regarding this ideal. In his study of the economy of the village, Janlekha (1955) found it necessary to distinguish five different kinds of functioning, mutually exclusive household units in Bang Chan: the typical nuclear family (59.4 percent of all households); a limited extended family, consisting of a man, wife, either or both their sets of parents, and unmarried children (8.1 percent); an extended family, consisting of the limited extended family plus married children, the latters' children, and any collateral relatives of any generation (26.8 percent); a one-person family (5.4 percent); and the ecclesiastical "family," consisting of the order of Buddhist monks, the only truly corporate group in the village (0.3 percent). (These variations of the nuclear family, all localized groups, should of course not be confused with what I, following Sharp [1957], have been calling the kindred, with what Kaufman [1960] refers to as spatially and

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596 602 *156 [609] and not only in the abstract, symbolic sense. Non-kin are approached in the hope that they eventually may be treated as kin; good government officials are unabashedly described as being like "good fathers"; the basic patterns of respect that are learned and practiced in the family are extended to relationships outside of it, although inevitably in more formal ways. There is no *rigid* psychological cleavage between the sentiments of kinship and the sentiments about individuals outside of the family. Conversely the mere fact of kinship does not assure that individuals will be given special emotional treatment: often the love between friends is greater than the love between kin (see the case of "Dang," his father, and father's friends in Hanks and Phillips 1961, or the case cited earlier of the man who left his wife because of his fondness for an employer). Kinship represents to the villager relationships of warmth, familiarity, and conviviality, but also unpredictability and undependability. Such is the nature of most human contact in Bang Chan.

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621 596 [662] *[156] In this type of cultural situation, one does *not* find arising the type of community power struggles or schisms apparently characteristic of many peasant communities (see Foster 1960–61). Bang Chan is indeed a placid community because no family has the organizational means or the quality of familial cohesiveness necessary to assume a dominant social, political, or economic position. Individuals assume important positions and individuals disagree and squabble, but rarely families. In surveying the cultural landscape of Bang Chan, I often wondered whether the basic unit of anthropological and sociological, as well as psychological, analyses was perhaps not the individual rather than the family, monastery, school, or village itself.

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609 574 Of the various forms politeness takes, its most relaxed, least contrived form in the cordiality that villagers extend to newcomers. Strangers to Bang Chan are hardly swept off their feet, but once contact has been established, they are welcomed with a degree of attention far exceeding simple tolerance of their presence. People express a curious interest in them as individuals, as if somehow their presence were adding a new dimension to the lives of their hosts. In the case of many Bang Chaners, this is probably true: the lives of these villagers are sufficiently routine and insular that the appearance of a new face is identified also with the advent of a significant and new experience. Still other villagers approach the newcomer with an attitude that says in effect: "One should try to meet and know as many persons as possible. Who knows what good may come of it?" The implied meaning here is that the cursory contact may in time develop into a firm relationship of reciprocal rights and obligations, whereby person A could turn to B to borrow money, ask his help in finding a job, help sponsor his son's ordination, and vice versa. There is in this attitude a sense of gentle optimism combined with opportunism. And still other villagers, probably the majority, approach the newcomer with no self reference at all, but with the simple intention of trying to make him feel comfortable. Whatever the intention in each case, however, the dominant behavior exhibited to the newcomer is openness, amiability, and curiosity.

576 574 521 609 The actual expressions of conviviality are at all times simple and straightforward. They involve asking the person such questions as his age, place of birth, whether he is married, or whether he has yet served in the monkhood. (Notice the phrasing of this last question. The polite Thai form is never whether a person has been a monk or not, but rather whether he has already been a monk or not *yet* become one. The syntax of the interrogative form assumes the good intentions of the other person.) If the individual is identified as coming from a locale with special or distinguishing characteristics, the conversation will often involve humorous allusions to the place. For example, if he is from the North, there will most likely be joking references to the beautiful women of Chiengmai; if he is from the Northeast, to the funny accent of the people of that area. If the relative statuses of visitor and host can be quickly identified (based upon age, clothes, speech patterns, and occasionally surname), the conversation may turn to topics whose very purpose is to emphasize status considerations and thus make the participants more comfortable with one another. If they

*156 159 difficulties (ask his father to save the family land for him; tell the aunt he did not want to marry the girl she had chosen—which he could have done had he felt secure about his relatives' love for him), he politely said nothing. The net result of all of this, as indicated in the text, was a deep sense of personal inadequacy and resentment that loved ones cannot be depended on. Further, Dang had begun to treat others as he felt others had treated him.

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are social peers, the Bang Chaners would easily turn the conversation to a discussion of the technical aspects of rice farming or even gambling. The latter would likely be discussed with a social superior only after some acquaintance. On the other hand, if one were clearly the other's superior, the superior would probably talk not about the methods of rice farming but, more generally and benignly, inquire, "Is all going well with you? Is there any way I might help you?" He might even proffer some unsolicited advice or aid. The tone and theme of the conversation would be expressive largely of the superior's concern with the welfare of his new-found friend, which the latter would typically accept.

All this is usually accompanied by gentle laughter and careful attention to appropriate pronominal forms. The good host will also serve his guest rain water, and if possible, scented rain water. If opportunity and finances permit, he may even offer him a warm Coca-Cola. The youngster who will actually serve the refreshment will make sure that it is on a coaster and that his hands are in the proper ritual position when he offers the drink to the guest. Such are the ingredients from which potential friendships are made.

Although the particulars of the kind of politeness found among family and friends are different from the above, the forms are essentially the same. Villagers do not talk about the funny accents of the people who live next door to them, nor do they rush to serve scented water when a brother comes to call. But they do take pains to express respect for each other by using proper honorific and pronominal forms, by looking to the oldest competent family member for advice, by talking of subjects that are pleasant and amusing, but never threatening or embarrassing.

The avoidance of embarrassing topics—even when the airing of such topics may be crucially important or beneficial to one of the parties concerned—is one of the most pronounced facets of village social life. To a Westerner accustomed to outspokenness, the types of situations that villagers define as embarrassing and the lengths to which they will go to avoid them sometimes appear to border on the sado-masochistic. Detailed interviews with two women whose husbands had taken second wives, for example, indicate that although at the time they were deeply disturbed by their husbands' actions (primarily for economic reasons; secondarily for emotional-sexual ones) they never once even brought the subject up with their husbands. They explained that they were too *ʔaaj* (embarrassed) to do so. In neither case was this embarrassment expressive of any feeling of inadequacy on their parts (the fear of hearing their husbands say, "I took a second wife because you are not adequate"). It was prompted rather by the desire to avoid an awkward and potentially rancorous confrontation. They did not want to put anybody on the spot. (Whether such a confrontation would *actually* lead to overt rancor is almost impossible to ascertain because